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FACTORS MOTIVATING CHINESE TOURISTS TO CHOOSE THAILAND AS A DESTINATION FOR RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Lu peng

Assumption University of Thailand

Lupeng3751@hotmail.com

Abstract

This research focuses on the study of factors motivating Chinese tourists to choose Thailand as a religious tourist destination. The demographic elements consist of religion, region, gender, age, education level and occupation. Tourists are investigated in both push factors and pull factors, those factors such as relaxation, desire to learn, faith, word of mouth, media, temple, amenities, cultural difference, religious activities, tourism product which become factors that motivate Chinese tourists to choose Thailand as a religious destination. For this study, the researcher used convenience sampling method and the sample size is 200. The Sampling focused on the Chinese tourists who had religious reasons to visit 5 famous temples in Bangkok. The questionnaire was distributed during July 2012. The result of frequency analysis shows that most of the Chinese tourists don't have clear religious reasons to visit the religious sites (55.8%). They are from North of China (29.6%) and the number of female (53.3%) is slightly higher than male. The major group of Chinese tourists is between 19-30 years old (53.3.6%), they hold a Bachelor's degree (62.5%) and work as employees in companies (51.2%). For hypothesis test, the research used both independent t-test and ANOVA. The results of P value indicate that there are significant differences in push factors motivating Chinese tourists to choose Thailand as religious destination regarding gender and education. Also there are significant differences in pull factors motivating Chinese tourists to choose Thailand as religious destination regarding religion and gender. Women prefer to have good amenities, arts, shopping and take photos; men like to learn Thai culture, Buddhism and religious activities. Different education level and different occupations cause Chinese tourists to have different needs for religious tourism. A Chinese tourist comes and visit Thai temples because of those both Pull and pushes motivating factors. For future, if the tourism sector could investigate and get good use of tourists' needs and make plan to promote religious tourism in Thailand, it will benefit both Thai government and locals.

Keywords: Religious tourism, Motivating factors, Push and Pull factors.